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THE GUARDIANS
OF HUMANITY

The Guardians of Humanity

THERE are many who look on history as the record of a succession of events, projected and carried out by the people whose names fill its pages, the kings and the statesmen, the generals and the admirals, who seem to dominate the peoples and impress their will on the nations. Such students are interested in the story of human life entirely from the standpoint of this world, and scan the surface of the incidents, never imagining that behind all these actors in the drama of the world-story there are Powers which really control the destiny of nations, Powers which keep a careful watch over the fate of humanity, which are continually concerning themselves with the welfare of the race as a whole. It is these Powers which I am calling 'The Guardians of Humanity', including under that name different types of Beings, different classes of intelligences; each type, or class has its own work to do, its own department of human progress to supervise, its own duty with which it is

specifically concerned. If we can trace, to some extent, these different types, and outline these different classes, we may reach a very much clearer and more definite view as to how the great world-process is carried on, than if we know naught of Their activities, and we may be able to realise that Intelligences are at work throughout, planning, directing, supervising. Some are greater, some are lesser ; some are superhuman, others not above humanity. Just as in a nation certain men, more or less eminent, are working along definite lines to bring about definite results with the help of their inferiors, so are those men, in turn, the agents of higher Intelligences, and are parts of a great plan, while they think they are working independently, and imagine themselves to be wholly self-moved.

In these several views of history, as everywhere else, the materialistic and spiritualistic theories of life stand over against each other in sharp antagonism. The materialistic theory regards the world as a huge machine, in which the blind unconscious forces of nature mechanically bring about the results of evolution. The spiritualistic theory sees it as a living organism, in which every force is the veil of an Intelligence, planning, directing, adapting, gradually and constantly working to bring about a foreseen end. It sees the world as the field of evolution not of humanity only, but of other lines of life as well, a field on which visible and (to us) invisible

inhabitants are ever intermingling, aiding and hindering each other; and it also sees this world not as an isolated unit, spinning in space, related to other globes merely by mechanical forces, but as interlinked with other worlds by bonds of sympathy and helpfulness, watched over, guided, shaped by super-human Intelligences. It discerns in the æonian changes of the earth, in the course of human history, in the rise and fall of empires, in the growth and decay of nations, the outlines of a settled plan, which harmonises human freedom with cosmic progress, utilises ignorance in the service of wisdom, evolves perfection through imperfections, and works by law to bliss.

Fundamentally, the whole world-process is the plan of the Logos Himself, and it is He who places different parts of it in the hands of His Viceroys, and these subdivide it further, and hand the smaller sections to the chief administrators, and so downwards to the rulers of smaller and smaller areas, until every grade of the vast Hierarchy is filled, each constrained by the outline given, and free to work out details according to individual capacity, as a dramatist gives the play to the stage-manager, and the stage-manager casts the actors for their parts, and the actors play those parts and make much or little of them according to their several capacities. There is freedom within law and power of initiative and adaptation within certain limitations. The total scheme is planned

with marvellous wisdom, and is carried out on the whole with marvellous Intelligence, although mistakes are made in the detailed management of the work; men, and the lower invisible Intelligences make mistakes in executing the work which is assigned to them, but such mistakes increase the knowledge and unfold the capacities of the blunderers, while the suffering caused by them to others is utilised to regain the equilibrium disturbed by those others in their own mistakes. Thus is one force for evil reduced to impotence by another while the good works on unimpeded. Thus are the blunders of the lower servants in the world-family prevented from marring the ultimate perfection of the whole, for none may thwart the resistless strength of the will by which the divine plan is carried out.

To see this plan, history must be studied in its largest sweeps, as in the swing of power from West to East, from East to West,¹ to return again to East. Note how in the elder days Empire found its centre where now the Atlantic rolls, laying its hand on Mexico on one side, on Egypt on the other. See how it swings eastward, and great Powers arise in Asia, and dominate the world. Then see how the pendulum swings back again, and Greece rolls back Persia and invades India, and Rome and Carthage grasp the sceptre of supremacy. But behold! Asia rises and

¹ See No. 5 of this series.

flings herself on Europe, and her conquering hosts press onward into France, to be hammered into retreat by Charles Martel; and later, for long the Moors hold Southern Spain, but are driven therefrom; and invading Turks are flung back by Hunyadi Janos, until all Europe is secured for Christendom save the the outpost in her south-eastern corner, over which yet waves the crescent of the Arabian Prophet. Then followed the return invasion of the East by the West, at first in the peaceful guise of commerce and then in warrior garb; until, in our own days, the far East threw her sword into the scale of Empire, and began once more to weigh it down for Asia, and, of that, the end is not yet.

It is obvious that this alternation is demanded for the all-round evolution of Humanity and its ultimate perfecting. The varied qualities evolved in different types of mankind are all needed for the full growth of man; he must have fire and also endurance, contemplative power and practical skill, religion to inspire and politics to shape. All that is best in West and in East, successively carried to each by the conquering forces of the other, is at last to be made common property, and to blend into the Perfect Man, each invasion leaving the invaded richer, each conquest giving new possibilities to the conquered, as the Saracen gave chivalry to the brutal hosts of Europe, and those same hosts taught the lesson of self-sacrifice to the too haughty and indifferent East.

Nor is this guidance of man's furious passions to the working out of ends that subserve the progress of the whole the only sign of beneficent supervision; this is seen also in the evolution of the very globe on which the development of humanity takes place. The fierce forces of nature which rend mountains, and tear huge chasms, engulfing oceans in the solid crust of earth, and toss up new land where billows erst were surging, those forces are but nature's ploughs and harrows, wherewith she prepares the soil for the sowing of her human crops. See how from ice-clad peaks and wide fields of eternal snow, the huge glacier slides, cutting a great groove as it grinds onward in slow resistless march, crushing inexorably all it meets, ploughing with mighty share a furrow through the mountain belt, pulverising every obstacle, carving the mighty rocks into sloping hill-sides, until at last an exquisite valley laughs into flowers in the sunshine, and fertile soil, watered by a rippling river, shines in a golden vesture of ripe corn, ready for the reaper, or in spring-time is as white with the blossoms of fruit-trees as it was once white with the ice and snow which created it. Or see how from mountain top belches out, roaring, a fiery fountain; smoke blackening the sky with a dense pall of darkness; rocks flung upwards hurtling through the air, and crushing the scarred trees on which they fall; white-hot streams of lava rolling down the mountain side, shrivelling into one black ruin the works alike of nature and of man;

frightful the scene, stifling the atmosphere, a very hell of horror and of gloom; but come again, and the torrents have cooled into the most fruitful of virgin soils, and heavy down-dropping pyramids of grapes are purpling where the floods of lava seethed. For the raging, rending, riving forces are ever the creators of the conditions in which new beauty, new order, new joy, may bloom; for nature, instinct with intelligence, aims ever at harmony, at beauty, at balanced proportion, using the ruin as the framework for the tossing branchlets of the creeper, and transmuting the dung-heap into the playful tendrils of the vine. Such unvarying turning of terror into joy, of ugliness into beauty, of destruction into new life, is no play of blind unconscious forces; it is the deliberate working of Intelligences towards ideal ends, the conscious shaping of a world to the purpose of evolving more and more highly organised lives.

Religions have given to these Intelligences various names; Hebrews, Christians, Muhammaḍans have grouped the higher grades together as archangels and angels, and have recognised the lower ranks, evolving side by side with men on earth, as genii, djins, fairies, or, among the Occultists of the Middle Ages, as elementals or nature-spirits. Hindūs, Zoroastrians, Buddhists, peering more deeply into the life-side of nature, have spoken of some of them as Devas, Shining Ones, of others as Men who have gone beyond their race in evolution, and have become its Rulers, its Guardians,

the Elder Brothers of the race, the 'First-born among many brethren'. It is to these two classes to which may most fitly be applied the title, 'The Guardians of Humanity'. We may leave on one side those who work out our planetary changes, who guide and shape the globe, and turn to those who are, specifically, Humanity's Rulers and Helpers.

Origen—one of the most deeply instructed among the teachers of the early Christian Church, one of those who were most deeply versed in occult knowledge, but who was too great and too wise to be understood by the rulers of the Christian Church in later days, and therefore escaped canonisation—Origen has some most interesting passages on the *Devas*, the Angels of the nations; he states that each of these national Angel-Guardians watches over his own nation, and that the Angel-Guardian of the Hebrews—and here is a view which is inconsistent with later orthodoxy, and which would hinder his recognition among Roman Catholic saints—is spoken of in the Hebrew Old Testament as 'the Lord,' the name being *Jahveh*, or *Jehovah*, not 'God.' While this early Christian view may seem startling to some modern Christians, it rescues from absurdity certain passages which have often served as effective weapons of attack in the hands of the assailant of Christianity. When it is written in the *Book of Judges*, for instance: "The Lord was with Judah, and he drave out the inhabitants of the hill country; for he could not drive

out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron."¹ It is obvious that the incompetency to conquer the chariots of iron cannot be ascribed to the Lord of the universe, but might be ascribed to the Angel of the Nation. And so with other passages. The belief in these national Devas was universal among ancient peoples. The 'Angel of the Lord,' a subordinate of the Chief Ruler, came as 'captain of the Lord's host' to Joshua; Minerva fought among the Greeks, Castor and Pollux among the Romans, Odin among the Norsemen; so in Indian stories may we read of the Devas who mingle in mortal's conflicts. An old legend tells how once a year the national Angels meet to receive their orders for the coming year, and then return to their peoples, to work out the directions given. Under each is a graded host of inferior Devas, who carry out the orders given, selecting appropriate agents among human beings, throwing thoughts into their minds, suggesting ideas and methods.

These national Devas, concerned with the rise and fall of peoples, rendering them instruments for the political, economical and social progress of humanity, co-operate with the Elder Brothers—called here in India R̥shis and by Theosophists Masters—who supervise and inspire religions and intellectual evolution. The Angel-Rulers of the nations are

¹ *Loc. cit.* I, 19.

super-human in intelligence and power, and they are served by graded hosts of lesser attainments, until we reach beings of intelligence equivalent to that of men, and then come to those who are sub-human in their capacities. The Rulers well understand the conditions under which alone human progress is possible, and realise the necessity of preserving the harmonious relations between man and man that we call morality. But in giving to the hosts below them the national plan which is to be carried out, they cannot impose upon them cut-and-dried details, since that would stunt and hinder their evolution. Hence often arise difficulties and hindrances. For the lower Devas—seeing only the end and not understanding either the moral laws necessary to curb the passions rendered strong and lasting by the growth of mind in man, or the union of mind and desire which forms the powerful human personality—often, in seeking to reach the purposed end and in stimulating men to achieve it, overlook the danger of the methods men may use, when passion overcomes righteousness, and hatred rules the mind. Without human experience, they cannot estimate aright the all-importance of moral obligations, born out of conditions they have never shared, and hence their inspirations, aimed at securing the end, may land men in ill-doings, the dangers and the moral degradation of which they do not see. Nor can we overlook the fact that the destructive hosts of the Brothers of the

Shadow struggle for the rule of humanity against the hosts of the White Brotherhood, and in the ceaseless strife between Spirit and Matter work for the dominance of the material over the uprising strength of the spiritual.

For instance: it is important for the progress of Europe that the Irish nation, as a nation, should be set apart from the other European peoples; the reasons for this are analogous with those which made it necessary to set India apart, and to prevent her race from intermingling with other races. It is necessary to separate off certain nations, into whose hands occult traditions shall be given, to keep in trust for the benefit of the whole world; nations which shall be first instructed in spiritual things, and shall thereafter be conquered, subjugated, despised, held as of little account, while other nations carry on material progress, and rise in prosperity, wealth and political power. Millennia ago, the land which was to be Ireland was ruled by great Atlantean Occultists, and they made it a mighty centre of force; with them, in harmonious co-operation, wrought the Devas of the land, the splendid intelligences who still find their home on some mountain tops of the Green Island and in whose charge has been left the guarding of the country until the day shall dawn when she shall again become the Island of Saints, the western centre of spiritual life, and from her shall surge over Europe the spiritualising wave, which shall purify Christianity

and make it a fit instrument for the Master of Christendom. For the Irish, by their type and temperament are the natural messengers of spirituality to the West; not the keen aggressive brain of the Teutonic sub-race, but the poetical easily inspired psychic brain of the Keltic sub-race, is the instrument most suitable for spreading spiritual ideas throughout Europe.

Turn to Irish history and read therein of the scourges which have torn her flesh, the iron which has entered into her heart. See how England harried the land, how she trampled on its people, and set the Saxon to enslave the Kelt. See how, by wicked laws, she crushed the Irish manufactures, impoverishing the people, until the land could no longer support its population, and unparalleled emigrations drained it, and scattered its children, reduced to misery in the country of their birth, to be the most successful colonists in Australia and America. See how, with the atrocious Penal Laws against Roman Catholics, she sought to take from the imaginative and poetic splendour-loving Kelts the only form of Christianity which can hold them, and to impose upon them her own grey and dismal Protestantism. And see how all this has not destroyed nor transmuted the Kelt, but has only enraged and embittered him, digging round his nationality the moat which defends it, into which have flowed the waters of an irreconcilable hate. The cruelties and injuries which the Irish patriot remembers against

England, wrought by national jealousy and religious bigotry, have been utilised to preserve the nationality of Ireland, which would otherwise have been lost, and which will yet be of priceless value to England and to Europe. Hatred is, in truth, a destructive force, but it can be overruled for the attainment of good, as the destructive forces of earthquake and volcano prepare new soil for the sowing of crops. The time came when there was hope of fairer days, and Charles Stuart Parnell was chosen to lead his nation to fuller life, and to build up its freedom within the limits of Britain's World-Empire; the Angel-Ruler of Ireland chose him, and her Devas surrounded and inspired him: but the hosts of darkness gathered to keep Ireland in bondage, and the passions, born of hatred, were inflamed to drive the ignorant to acts of cruelty, to murder and to maiming, inflicted on man and harmless beast alike; the chosen Leader was not brave enough nor strong enough to sternly check the excesses of the baser of his followers; he did not realise that the support of the Rulers will not be given where crime and cruelty are winked at, if not approved; and they withdrew their aid, left him to become a broken politician, and permitted the country to sink once more under the yoke, and to learn that those who are the slaves of their own passions are not yet worthy to be free.

Such was the lesson taught by the temporary failure of the Home Rule movement, and it is one which

India would do well to profit by. For India's national Devas are concerned with the great wave of national life now flooding this country, and its temporary success or failure depends on the moral standard of its leaders, and the control which they are able to exercise over their followers. The wave is sent out by the Ruling Deva—the Deva Rājā—and all his higher subordinates share, in a lower degree, his far-reaching knowledge, his magnificent power and his splendid benevolence, but the lower Devas cannot rise to this understanding of human conditions, and, when they fling themselves into the struggle they form an added danger, stimulating the hot-headed and the ignorant, who are inevitably present in every widespread movement, and thus instigating them to go very much further than is right. The whole success of the movement now depends on the answer to the question: "Are the national leaders strong enough and wise enough to restrain the passions of their more excitable followers, and to guide the movement along the lines of ordered freedom?" Is each man, who aspires to become a national leader, strong enough to go against his own followers, when the thoughtless overpower the thoughtful, when those who are moved by hatred grow more influential than those who are moved by love? That is the test of worthiness in a leader, and the Irish failure is a warning to be taken by Indian leaders now, lest they also should wreck a great national movement by forcing the Ruling Deva

to withdraw his help, thus reducing it to a partial paralysis until nobler leaders shall come.

You may see the hand of the Ruling Deva of India very plainly of late years. India was sleeping, indifferent to the decay of her religion, to the steady materialisation of her sons; despite all urging, all pleading, all rebuke, she slept on, careless of warning voices, lost to all sense of duty. Her children were being educated by religionists who hated and despised her ancient faith, or by men indifferent to religion altogether; her ancient civilisation was being steadily undermined, and was in danger of sinking altogether under the rising flood of western influence. Her arts and her industries were perishing, while her children went shopping in Birmingham and Manchester. Blind and deaf, India was sunk in a sleep that threatened to pass into the sleep of death. Then as reason and pleading failed, the Deva took up the scourge and smote her, and within a few years despair accomplished what all else had failed to achieve. The Universities' Act was passed by an arrogant Viceroy against the arguments of Indian leaders and the important protests of the few. Education was made so costly that it was practically denied to the children of the traditionally learned but traditionally poor class. Indians had for years been urged to bestir themselves in looking after their own education; then, while they remained inert, the lash of that Act fell upon them, and its sting made them do more in months than

they had before done in years. As Government was taking out of their reach the higher education, they must build their own schools and colleges, and control it for themselves. When they sent up their sons to matriculate at the Calcutta University, after years of pinching economy that they might pay their fees, and found, that, under the new conditions, only 15 per cent. passed, the parents felt that some new arrangement was needed; here, in Madras, this very year, but 17 per cent. have been allowed through, and that among boys notoriously keen-brained, endowed with a power of memory that makes examinations easy. These things are hard on the individuals who suffer, but they come as a spur and a stimulus to the national spirit; and when the road is thus blocked, the very hopelessness of removing the obstacle forces the nation into hewing out a new road for itself. Bad and unfair legislation is the scourge of the national Deva to force his people to exert themselves when they are inert and indifferent. This India, land beloved of all spiritual influences, nursed on the knees of the Devas, she must not be allowed to go down into decay and death, to perish from among the great nations of the world.

Y Another illustration of this scourging of her into action may be seen in the inception and growth of the Swadeshi movement—the movement for the home production of all articles that can be made in India. Very soon after his arrival in India, Colonel H. S.

Olcott, the President-Founder of our Society, concerned himself with this question, and while the T. S. was in its first Headquarters in Bombay, he held an Exhibition of Indian products in connection with the Society's Convention. He constantly, in his speeches, urged on Indians the duty of supporting indigenous industries, and derided their love of foreign products and foreign ways. From the very beginning of my own work in India, I followed along these same lines, exhorted Indians to use home-made in preference to foreign-made goods, and set them the example in my own house and clothes. The audiences applauded the sentiments, but very few Indians followed the practice. It was a voice crying in the wilderness. Now on every side we hear the cry of Swadeshi; speakers urge it, hearers pledge themselves to support it, shop-keepers put up signs proclaiming that their goods are Indian-made; it has become the fashion. And why? not because it is supported by logical argument, not because it is economically sound, not because it is patriotic; but because the Viceroy was ill-advised enough to partition Bengal. The two things were utterly unconnected from any logical standpoint; the unity or the partition of Bengal had no relation to the economic question. But the boycotting of Lancashire goods might arouse English attention and might thus cause pressure to be brought to bear on the Government in England, so Swadeshi was caught up as a political weapon not as a matter of

economic reform. Home-production was necessary for the revival of Indian industries ; in some way or other it was necessary to infuse into Indian minds the determination to use Indian-made goods ; and as the Devas failed to bring this about by teaching the economic side of the question, they took advantage of the passions aroused in a political struggle, and used an altogether irrelevant issue to bring about a widespread economical reform. Swadeshi will not die out in India when the political agitation, which gave it so fine an impetus, has subsided. It has become a national movement ; Government has blessed it ; its economic future is secure. X

We thus see that while a Ruling Deva will ever keep in view the best interests of the nation in his charge, he will employ pain as well as pleasure, adversity as well as prosperity, defeat as well as victory, for the carrying out of the nation's training and the shaping of its destiny. Clear-eyed and strong with firm hands upon the reins, he guides his people steadily along the appointed ways. See how the Angel-Guardian of Russia is leading his people through defeat abroad and revolution at home, how he keeps his way, unswerving, through massacre, arson, famine, misery of every kind, preparing his young undisciplined nation for a mighty destiny, training it to become, in the future, powerful, pure and free.

The intellectual and religious progress of nations is, as already said, in the hands of the great Beings

who are called R̥shis, or Masters, men in whom Divinity is manifest. These are the liberated spirits, 'the saved,' in the real meaning of the Christian word, the 'Pillars in the temple of my God,' who bear on Their strong shoulders the heavy burden of evolving humanity. They are the Founders of the many religions which have been given for the purification and the uplifting of man. They it is, who, coming out into the world, age after age, show out to men the light of Divinity, and point out the path that leads from ignorance to knowledge, from sorrow to bliss. They it is who guard and foster the religions They have founded, inspire them with spirituality, strive to lift them out of superstition, redeem them from degradation, purify them from error. They it is, who, stimulating the intellect of men, throw into receptive minds the ideas which illuminate, lead to the discoveries which conquer, give the conceptions which idealise, open to the beautiful the senses of the painter, the sculptor, the musician, the architect. They it is, who breathe in the poet, who enlighten the philosopher, who create in the dramatist. Unceasing in vigilance, untiring in patience, illimitable in tenderness, They watch over humanity and tread the path it must follow, hewing the road through the jungles of ignorance, casting the causeway across the morasses of doubt, cutting the steps up the precipices of evil. Long, long might humanity

wander in the sandy deserts and amid the quaking bogs, were it not for these Guardians who protect and guide, and who lead Israel from the house of bondage to the promised land of peace. And They it is, also, who, ever scanning the serried ranks of the races They guide, see the spark of spirituality shining here and there in individual hearts, fan the spark into flame, lift the aspirant into discipleship, draw him into co-operation with Their work, and thus strengthen the force which lifts, thus multiply the hands which toil.

The great Brotherhood, which is ever seeking to quicken the evolution of the race, has, in our own days, again flung aside the veil which hides it from human eyes, and has sent out some of its members to renew the spiritual impulse which had grown feeble, and threatened to disappear. These, summoning Their disciples to renewed visible activity, have sent out the new wave we call the Theosophical Movement and have placed on it Their 'ship,' the Theosophical Society, made of those who would rather carry than be carried, who would rather steer than drift. This ship carries Their banner, and, borne on the crest of the wave, it shows to all the way, while its crew place buoys in the channels, erect light-houses on the rocks, and mark the dangerous shoals. It is for the Theosophical Society to act as the herald of a new civilisation, guided by its Masters to co-operate with the Devas, the Angels of the nations. It is for it to

supply the builders of the future, and, rising to the height of its splendid opportunity, to generate in its womb and to nurture in its bosom the workers of yet unborn days, the servants of the humanity that is soon to arise upon earth. Chosen by the Masters of the WISDOM to aid Them in Their glorious task, it has yet to justify its election, to press forward to the goal, lest it should become a castaway, a broken vessel. For every election from on High must be made sure by achievement here, and every choice must be confirmed by the labours of the chosen. Even the guardians of Humanity may not constrain the will of human beings, and consent is awaited ere the crown may rest upon the brow.

In our ears to-day the great cry is sounding: "Who will help us? who will labour among men?" Out of the myriads of mankind some are running after fame, some are running after wealth, some are running after pleasure; they seek to grasp the toys with which the world is filled, and in their eagerness to win and hold, the rattle of the earth so fills their ears, that they are deaf to the call of the Elder Brothers, to the call to service, to labour, to renunciation. From time to time They send out Their messengers to sound again the ancient message, and to win from the arms of the world some willing spirit, ready to answer to the call, joying to take service with the Servants of Mankind. Thus They sent Their disciple, H. P. Blavatsky, and many a one

answered to her as she cried aloud Their message :
 "Come and help us, and knit your little strength to
 ours in this great work." We are all, my brothers,
 feeble; poor is our strength and limited our intel-
 ligence. But love can make strong the weakness of
 our power, and love can illuminate the obscurity of
 our intelligence. The heart that loves, that utterly
 surrenders itself, that says in answer : "I will help;
 here am I; let me help, however feebly; let me be a
 channel through which your help may flow to man"
 —such a heart is never rejected; to such a one rings
 back the answer : "Come and work with us for
 humanity; share the toil, and share also the glory of
 the achievement; come with us and let us labour to-
 gether for the uplifting of mankind."

